

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: DAVID TOMS
May 3, 2017

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome David Toms to the Insperity Invitational media center. David, get us started. This is your first time at this event. You had a chance to see the golf course this morning. What were your initial thoughts?

DAVID TOMS: Golf course is in really good shape. All the holes are what I remember from years ago when we played here. A lot can happen on the golf course. Some risk/reward out there.

The wind can be tricky through the pine trees with the way the holes are guarded around the greens, so you have to pay attention to your club selection, but you can make birdies out there as well. Fun course to play.

Q. Have you had -- do you have a history here at all at this course, back when you were starting on TOUR?

DAVID TOMS: Before TOUR I used to play college tournaments here. We played the Golf Digest Invitational here in college, and then played TOUR school, my first TOUR school, the finals were here, and once I got on TOUR, I got to play here every year and here I am getting to play again, so fond memories of the Woodlands Golf Course.

Q. Any changes from those early days till now on the golf course itself that stand out?

DAVID TOMS: Not really. From what I remember everything seems -- you know, if there were some changes, they've been fairly subtle, and green complexes seem the same. Obviously the corridor is the same place, the holes, the routing, everything, and tee boxes. A lot of history here for me.

Q. Just your thoughts, first year on Tour. What's this first few months been like for you as a new player on this Tour?

DAVID TOMS: First thoughts are that the guys still play really good golf. I knew that by the scores they were shooting when I would follow it, but being out here around it every week, guys are still playing great golf so to have a chance to win a golf tournament out here. You have to play extremely well, and with three rounds it's hard to make things up when you have a so-so day, so you have to play great every day.

It's been enjoyable for me and my family -- I think my wife has been out more this year, seen more rounds of golf played by me than she has the last five or six years combined on the TOUR, so that's been fun to have my family around a little bit more.

Q. (No microphone.)

DAVID TOMS: Yeah, you know, I talked to some of the guys before I came out and kinda knew what it was like. Seems like the mood is always pretty good out here; whereas, you know, you can get out on the PGA TOUR and a guy can be playing decent golf and missing cuts, and he's in a bad mood, and there is so much pressure about keeping your jobs, and all those things.

To, me that's in the back of everyone's minds even when a guy is trying to win a golf tournament, coming down the stretch if he has a chance and he's not playing that great, he's still trying to position himself for a good finish to where he can stay exempt for the next year to have another shot at it. Whereas out here guys have had their careers, they're pretty relaxed, and they're out here having fun.

They're still trying to win and play great golf, but at the same time they've done it before.

They're not too worried about it. Every day seems to be pretty low key. You've got the Pro-Am's, taking a golf CART, which is nice on some of the old bodies out here, so it's a laid back-type atmosphere but still competitive once you get to late Sunday and everybody is still trying to win.

Q. Is there a certain age when you were at and you kept saying to yourself, two more years or three more years, I'll hit the Champions Tour? How long have you been thinking about it?

DAVID TOMS: Probably from age 40 on, you're thinking about you're one year closer every time you're out here, and it was about getting out here in a more relaxed atmosphere, seeing guys I've played against my whole career and just enjoying it a little bit more, going to new places. When you go to the same cities for 25 years and do the same thing, eat in the same place, stay in the same hotel lots of times, you just want something different. For me, this is part of that, being able to play the Champions Tour.

Q. Is it not quite as cutthroat?

DAVID TOMS: No, it's not. A lot of the guys have already had great careers on the PGA TOUR. This is a bonus, still being competitive, and still being able to play a sport that you love and make money doing it and having competition.

We're very lucky. This doesn't happen in other sports. Here in golf you have this second chance to have another career. I think a lot of the guys really enjoy that.

Q. Who are some of your best friends on the Champions Tour? Somebody that you wanted to -- looking forward to hanging around with again?

DAVID TOMS: If I threw out names it would be like leaving people out. It's just a lot of people that I'm fairly friendly with throughout the years. You've played in their charity events, you've been around them, you respected their games. Some of the guys might have been guys I looked up to tell me how to play golf courses when I first came out, or where to stay, what to do, do I stay in housing this week? Where do I eat? How do I travel there?

Guys like that that were ahead of me and meant a lot to my career and my game early on. So kind of the same thing that I did for some of the young guys my last few years

on TOUR, that would look up to a guy that had been out there for a long time for advice. A lot of these guys I'm playing with now are those guys when I was coming up.

Q. You've played with some of these guys for so many years. Do you feel at all like a rookie?

DAVID TOMS: Not really. It's just the start of another career. I'm still able to play the PGA TOUR, if I want to. Even though those purses are big and have great golf tournaments and still have some friends out there, guys that I like to play with. You see me out here playing every week, so you see what I enjoy more, and that's the plan moving forward is to play out here full-time and sprinkle in TOUR events when it works out.

Q. You mentioned you had some fond memories coming through tournaments here throughout the years. Are there any that stick out?

DAVID TOMS: Both good and bad. I remember breezing through TOUR school right when I got out of college and just having a wreck the last two rounds and missing my card by two shots. Not a very good memory there, but then having decent finishes here through the years. Won a college event here, blew away the -- had a good tournament compared to the rest of the field, against a good field.

So I've had some success here, but, like I said, also some bad memories as well. That's the type of golf course it is, really, where you feel like you're playing okay, and you can get in some bad spots, but if you get some good breaks you can take advantage of the golf course.

Q. I spoke to Jeff Maggert earlier in the week. He's been out here a couple of years now, and he appreciates the laid back atmosphere but really noticed the competition, there is a good competitive nature of what's going on out here.

DAVID TOMS: Sure, and one thing you have to realize, almost everyone out here has been able to win multiple golf tournaments, either in their PGA TOUR career or in their Champions Tour career, so they know how to win. Whereas you play the PGA TOUR, you've got a lot of guys in the field that have never won a golf tournament before; whereas, out here they all have, and they all know how to get it done, so you don't see that many guys back up when they have a chance to win or have the lead.

So it is a different type of field. You're playing against guys that have won and know how to do it, which makes it even more difficult.

Q. As you said, that aspect plus just the three-day tournament makes it very difficult to win?

DAVID TOMS: I think so. You have to play good every day. You don't have to play great to have a chance, you just have to play really solid golf. You don't have to go crazy low, I mean, obviously it helps to have a good, low round, but certainly if you shoot even par or over par on any round you're not going to have a shot to win.

Q. Did you set any personal goals that you wanted to accomplish this year? Anything public you want to talk about?

DAVID TOMS: No. The reason I didn't, because a lot of the golf courses I've never played before, some I have, but you don't really know what the level of competition is like until you get out there, how far are guys still sitting the ball, how the golf course is set up, what are the yardages, all those things.

So as far as saying, I want to win this tournament or finish here or I want to have this finish, I think it's more about my goals were to come out here and prepare, just like I have my whole career on the TOUR, and work at it, and approach it like it's a big deal and make it important and go out there and enjoy it and have fun, and just see where that gets me at the end of the year.

Q. As an amateur golfer, I love playing courses I've never played before. I like the challenge, seeing something different. Do you feel the same way, that you want to see the courses that you've never been on before, even though it may not help your game?

DAVID TOMS: I look forward to that. I look forward to some of these golf tournaments, some of these cities that I've never been to before, golf courses I've never played and just the part of doing something new. Like I said, that's what got old to me about the PGA TOUR is just going to all these places and then what happened to me on the TOUR is a lot of the tournaments that I won either had gotten cancelled or they changed the golf courses and all those things.

So it wasn't like I had all this experience when you go show up at an event. So for me to play new golf courses, see new things, stay in new hotels, it's a lot of fun. It's something I look forward to.